

My Family Heritage Interview

Directions: Interview someone in your family, preferably someone who is older than your parents. If possible, this person should be a relative. Set up a time to meet with this older person and interview him/her about his/her life. Be sure to record in some way what the person says because you will need to write it into paragraph form for your identity book project. In your introductory paragraph, you should introduce the person you have chosen to interview. Include your relationship to the person, the circumstances of your time together, and a brief physical description of this person. The rest of your writing should deal with the direct questions from the interview and the answers the person gives to some of the following questions. This information should be developed into paragraph form. Do not try to include all of the information the person gives you during the course of the interview.

Below is a list of sample interview questions. You are not limited to just these questions. It would be best just to let the person talk about the history of your family while you take notes or tape record the interview. He/she may have some interesting things to say that are not on the list below, so do not limit your interview to just these questions.

Suggested Questions for Interview:

I. Family Background

1. When and where was your mother born? Where did she grow up?
2. What was her maiden name?
3. What memories do you have of your mother during your childhood?
4. Describe your mother's personality traits.
5. What are the most important things you learned from your mother?
6. When and where was your father born? Where did he grow up?
7. What memories do you have of your father during your childhood?
8. Describe your father's personality traits.
9. What are the most important things you learned from your father?
10. How did your mother and father meet? How long did they know each other before getting married? What do you know about their courtship and wedding?

II. Early Life

11. How many brothers and sisters did you have?
12. Did you like your position in the family – oldest, middle, youngest,
13. only child?
14. What did you and your family enjoy doing together?
15. What chores did you have?
16. How did your childhood differ from childhood today?
17. Tell an early experience with your family that stands out in your memory.
18. What do you remember best about your mother? Your father?

III. Schooling

19. What was your first school like?
20. What subject did you like best?
21. What subject was hardest for you?
22. Describe a teacher that you especially remember.
23. What were you proudest of accomplishing?
24. What sports did you enjoy?
25. What did you like to do with school friends?
26. Tell about a prank or adventure you recall.

IV. Career

27. What career did you choose?
28. What preparations did you make?
29. What have your duties and responsibilities been?
30. Have you had to adjust to many changes in your work place?

V. Favorites

31. Tell what and why about your favorite:
Book, Gift, Type of music, Hero, Song, Vacation Spot, Singer, Season, Movie, Family Tradition, Actor/Actress, Family Get-Together, Food, Modern Convenience

VI. Regrets, Mistakes, Milestones, and Turning Points

32. What is the smartest decision you ever made?
33. What was the most interesting experience you have ever had?
34. What is the nicest thing you've ever done for someone else?
35. Describe the happiest event(s) in your adult life.
36. Describe the funniest, silliest, or most embarrassing event(s) in your adult life.
37. What period in your life did you enjoy most? Why?
38. What is the biggest mistake you ever made?
39. Is there something you have always dreamed of doing but never did?
40. Where have you always wanted to go but never have?
41. What is the hardest lesson you've ever had to learn?
42. What do you know now that you wish you had known when you were younger?

VII. Personal Philosophy (ask and answer all of these)

43. What is your advice for getting along with people?
44. Who do you think is the greatest person of this century? Of past centuries?
45. Of all the inventions and discoveries of the twentieth century, which one would you say is the most significant?
46. What do you think of schools today?
47. In what ways are they better or worse than schools you attended?
48. What do you think are our biggest problems, today: international conflicts, energy shortage, crime, inflation, unemployment, health needs, or something else? What can each person do to help solve these problems?

VIII. How Life Has Changed (ask and include all of these questions)

- 49. What are the most positive changes you have seen during your lifetime?
- 50. What are the most negative changes you have seen during your lifetime?
- 51. Is today's younger generation very different from the young people of your generation? Have their values changed for better or worse?

IX. Heritage and Ethnic Traditions

- 52. What old-time values and customs do you think should be kept and honored?
- 53. What did you learn from your parents and from your experiences that you would like to hand down to young people today?
- 54. What advice do you have for young people?
- 55. Describe foods common to your ethnic group.
- 56. What are the most important holidays celebrated as part of your ethnic heritage? Tell about them.
- 57. Tell about some traditions and rituals of your ethnic group & what they mean to you.
- 58. What makes you proudest to be a member of your ethnic group?